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ABSTRACT

This listing of educational resources provided by the U.S. Army is designed to inform counselors about available services. They will then be better equipped to help young people decide whether to enlist (or re-enlist). Counselors are warned to use the information with caution, however, since evaluative information is not available and the success or efficiency of the programs is not described. The listing includes the following programs: (1) Counseling and Testing; (2) High School Completion; (3) College Preparation; (4) College and University; (5) Vocational; and (6) Financial Assistance. It is also noted that each military base has special programs to meet the individual needs of the personnel assigned there. In most cases, education while on active duty is considered a voluntary activity, and a soldier's assigned duties may prevent him from participating in the program of his choice. The information provided should be useful to both counselor and counselee. (Author/BP)

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EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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It should come as no surprise to counselors that each year many students and ex-students enlist in the U S Army. Reasons for enlistment range from lack of any job thru a desire for training and education to a following of the path of least resistance. Many of those individuals who contemplate enlisting in the Army consult counselors prior to making their decision. It behooves counselors to have as much information as possible to facilitate the decision making process.

Since an interest in education is frequently one of the factors affecting the decision to enlist, the following information about the Army's General Educational Development program may be helpful both to the counselor and the counselee. No effort has been made to describe the education programs of the other armed services, though they frequently parallel Army programs, since the writer's experiences with these is limited. It should also be noted that no attempt has been made to evaluate the success or efficiency of any program or service listed because evaluative information is not presently available on a Army-wide basis. Therefore the counselor is warned that caution is advised in using this information in counseling.

Each Army installation with more than 750 military personnel assigned has an education center staffed with civilian educators. Although Army Regulation 621-5 (4 November 1975) outlines Army GED programs, no two installations have exactly the same programs since each Army Education Center is individually organized to meet the needs of the soldiers assigned there. The following is a general description

of types of educational services and programs available to soldiers followed by a description, where applicable, of how these programs and services are available at Ft. Meade, Maryland, the Army Education Center employing this writer.

Counseling and Testing

Education centers have civilian counselors available to help soldiers define and achieve their educational and vocational goals. Testing and job placement information is available at no cost to the soldier to assist in these processes. At Ft. Meade, counseling services are available from 7:30am to 9:00pm daily. A partial list of available tests includes: SVIB, MVII, CAT, GATB, CLEP, High School GED.

High School Completion

Although male non-high school graduates are accepted for enlistment (female enlistees must be high school graduates), few are allowed to reenlist without achieving a high school diploma or its equivalent. Army installations have formal and informal programs, many of them conducted during the working day, to help soldiers achieve this goal. At Ft. Meade, Anne Arundel County (md.) Public Schools offer a 12 week "High School Prep" leading to a Maryland High School Diploma. Soldiers can also choose to take the High School GED examinations for an equivalency certificate from their home state.

College Preperation

Most installations offer a program for high school graduates who feel that they require remedial or review work prior to enrolling in

college. At Ft. Meade, "College Prep" is offered thru Anne Arundel Community College (Md.) in English, Reading and Mathematics. Both "College Prep" and"High School Prep" are financed by the Veterans Administration at no cost or loss of eligibility to the soldier.

College and University Programs

Almost all installations offer college level courses leading towards undergraduate or graduate degrees. In addition, college level correspondence study is available thru the Defense Activity for Non Traditional Educational Support (DANTES) and participating colleges and universities. At Ft. Meade, programs are offered leading to the Associate, Bachelors and Masters degrees by several local institutions. The coursework is offered in the evenings for off duty, part time students. Advisors from these schools are available on a regular basis. At some very large posts doctoral level and/or daytime classes are available.

Vocational Programs

Most installations offer vocational-technical programs either thru a local college or thru the education center itself. These programs are offered to train an individual in a Military Occupation Speciality (MOS) or to prepare an individual for employment upon separation from the Army. Programs offered by the Ft. Meade Army Education Center are: Automotive Mechanics, Welding, Electronics, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning, Drafting and Construction Technology. Airframe and Powerplant Mechanics is offered thru a local institution. Also, courses are offered periodically to help innividuals prepare for their yearly MOS examination.

Ft. Meade has a MOS Library composed of Army and Department of Defense publications used to prepare for the MOS examinations.

Financial Assistance

The following Army-wide programs are available to soldiers to assist in meeting educational costs:

a) The GI Bill- A VA financed program open to active duty soldiers which pays for tuition and fees.

b) Army Tuition Assistance- Pays 75% of college tuition costs.

c) Service Academy Appointment- West Point and the other service academies reserve certain vacancies for active duty enlisted personnel.

d) ROTC Schlarships- Enlisted personnel can compete to attend college full time on ROTC Scholarships.

e)"Bootstrap" and Fully Funded Program- Names given to Army financed programs that allow selected individuals to attend college full time while drawing full salary. These programs are presently unfunded and are accepting no applications.

Special Programs

Each institution has special programs to meet the need of those soldiers assigned there. Special programs at Ft. Meade include an Individual Learning Laboratory for those whose schedules will not allow regular class attendance or who prefer individual study to class attendance. A language laboratory is available for those who wish to become proficient in any one of over 30 languages.

In addition to what has been presented, the following non Army education programs are available or will soon be available:

a) College or vocational school credit for MOS held or service schools attended is recommended by the American Council on Education in a yearly published guide.

b) Servicemen's Opportunity Colleges are a group of colleges that have agreed to help the soldier or veteran by offering credit for his or her Army experiences and to provide assistance in entering and adjusting to college.

c) The Bureau of Apprenticeship Training of the Department of Labor is helping the Army in organizing a program which will allow soldiers to use their service experiences for advanced standing in selected apprenticeship programs.

d) Project Ahead is an enlistment option in which the enlistee applies to any one of 1,168 selected Project Ahead colleges and universities. These schools advise the enlistee thruout his or her enlistment as to what courses to take at the place of duty for eventual transfer back to the Project Ahead school upon discharge.

It should be noted that education while on active duty is, for the most part, a voluntary, free time activity. The type of programs at the soldiers station of duty and the type of work assignment may make it virtually impossible to engage in a desired program. However, no one entering the Army should be procluded from advancing themselves thru education. As with most else in this world, the individuals desire and actions play a most important role.